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ART. V. — THE SOUTHERN QUESTION.

THE words at the head of this article have exercised the public mind in the United States without any definite ascertainment of what they meant, at least for the unreflecting multitude. Has there ever been in a specific sense a "Southern question"? What was it? What is it? What will it continue to be? What will be its duration? What was its origin? What will be its solution? What is its present importance, whether it be still alive with its primitive vigor or turning into the yellow leaf of decay? What were and what are its effects and influences in a national point of view, assuming the complete and undisputed existence of our nationality to be established, after having been also a *question* for so long a time in which was involved, deeply laid within it, the other one, — the Southern question; for they became the *major* and the *minor* of a syllogism, with a *conclusion* ever to be remembered on this continent. These are the points which I intend to glance over in a necessarily short article, — short when compared to the magnitude of the subject, — to which full justice cannot be done without the development of considerations of political, civil, and social economy which would embrace a diversity of matters extending over too large an area.

The Southern question germinated on the first day when a slave was introduced into the thirteen North American colonies of Great Britain. It would have been the Northern or the Western question if slavery had been established in a remunerative form, and had taken such roots and such proportions as to have become a social, financial, and political institution in those sections, instead of the Southern part of the country. More than the artificial barrier between the Puritan and the Cavalier, more than the climate, more than the peculiarities of the productions of the soil, more than the antagonism of commercial or other interests, it made the South distinct from the North and West. The masters being whites, and the slaves blacks, there necessarily sprang up a domineering and proscriptive aristocracy in all its relations with the inferior class,

free or not, which belonged to the African race, whether their skin retained its original ebony color, or whether through several mongrel generations it had so approached the ivory complexion as to protect those who possessed it from detection by an inexperienced eye. But, although an implacable aristocracy in one sense, it was in another the broadest social democracy; for all the whites, poor or rich, ignorant or educated, were on a footing of equality. The proudest planter with a princely estate would hardly have ventured, at least in Louisiana, on refusing to seat at his table the humble pedler who stopped to sell his wares, and claimed his hospitality; if he employed a white mechanic, that mechanic ate with his own refined and delicately bred family. No Caucasian was ever sent to the kitchen, for that would have assimilated him to the black race, and put him on a level with slaves. The position, if attempted to be given, would not have been accepted, it would have been a forfeiture of caste, and would have been resented as an insult. There was a nobility in the white skin more sacred and more respected than the one derived from the letters-patent of kings. Thus the slavery of the blacks constituted a white aristocracy, and the equality resulting from the possession of that privileged complexion made of that aristocracy a democracy. It was a singular compound which had never existed before, and which made of the Southern people a peculiar one, difficult to be understood. It was the realization of the Janus face with its two different and antagonistic physiognomies; it was the typical double-headed eagle, but with only one big heart glowing with pride and defiance. It was a superiority of social position, and that superiority was resented with ill-dissembled impatience in those States where it did not prevail.

The writer of this article remembers a French nobleman saying to him after a sojourn of several months in Louisiana: "With you alone the feudal age still exists. With us it is a thing of the past. There are in Europe dukes and marquises, it is true. But what does it signify? It is an empty bawble, a vain title. What is a marquis without a marquise? You Southern planters, you are high barons in reality, although not in name. You have vassals over whom you reign with absolute sway. Therefore you have all the virtues, qualities, defects, and vices of an aristocracy. Hence you are the born rulers of your country, because you have

from the cradle the instinct of command, and you inherit from generation to generation that intellectual and physical organization, that knowledge of human nature, that captivating refinement of tastes, that confiding geniality of manners, that innate self-possession and self-confidence which characterize you, with a natural tendency, besides, to those studies and pursuits which are productive of a race of statesmen, such, for instance, as are to be found in England. Therefore, as long as you retain your peculiar institution, you will remain what you are, and, although numerically in the minority, you will control the destinies of the Union." The sagacious Frenchman was not the only one who arrived at these conclusions. There was in them a logic which gave rise to the true "Southern question." The causes which procured for one section of the country a predominance over the rest were to be destroyed, cost what may. It became the most ruthless of all questions, — the question of power. It lay in a nutshell, but that shell was destined to explode with the force of a pent volcano. It soon swelled into a political Vesuvius, and showered upon the broad face of our country that irresistible lava of destruction, which has removed all landmarks, and perhaps will be found in the future to have changed the sectional aristocracy and sectional democracy, which operated as salutary checks and counter-checks upon one another, into a concentrated national despotism, that will run its predestined course.

At the North and West, the existence of the condition of things I have described not being found, there was a political democracy of whites, as with us at the South, but within that democracy there was a social aristocracy that did not recognize within its exclusive precincts the equality of the white skin. At the South the "white trash" claimed and enjoyed social equality with the wealthy, — an equality which sometimes asserted itself, not only in the courts of law, but also in the courts of honor, the jurisdiction of which was seldom declined by the parties interested, and there was no exception taken on the ground of rank and education. The "white trash" had its pride of birth, based on its Caucasian origin, which enabled it to look down on the inferiority of a much lower class. At the North and West the poor whites — I will not say the "white trash," the expression not being in use there — were compelled to bow to a more favored class, superior to them

by the accident of wealth, and with whom they could claim no social equality by virtue of a nobility of complexion. The cobbler would not have ventured to sit at dinner with the millionaire at whose country mansion he had sought hospitality. Thus, at the South there was a democracy within an aristocracy, and at the North an aristocracy within a democracy. But the two aristocracies and the two democracies were very different. The aristocrats of the South were real ones. They were, or entitled to become, the masters of men. The aristocrats of the North were spurious; they assumed to be what they were not and could not be, from the very nature of the circumstances in which they were placed. They were wealthy merchants, shopkeepers, mechanics, manufacturers, speculators, brokers, bankers, but they were not barons after the fashion of the South, to use the expression of the Frenchman whose language I have quoted. It was evidently impossible that commonwealths so antagonistic in their fundamental organization should form a confederacy, without there being an incessant struggle for a reciprocal modification of their status. Hence the prediction of an "irrepressible conflict" which fell from the lips of a celebrated American statesman. In the South the population was divided into two parts, — the whites, who, rich or poor, ignorant or educated, constituted the privileged class, the Caucasian nobility, like the Magyar element of Hungary; then, the blacks who were slaves, and who, proud of their daily intercourse with the superior, the godlike race in their eyes, and exulting in a sort of good-natured familiarity in which they were indulged, were conscious at the same time of the importance which they derived from the social position of their masters, and enjoyed a protection and an exemption from the anxieties of life which made them look down upon the free negro, of pure or mixed blood, with a sense of great superiority. It was with contempt and derision that these were called "free niggers" by those who remained in servitude. The free colored man was the Pariah of the Southern commonwealth. He was the lowest step of the social ladder. It must be admitted, however, that some of that race, who had been emancipated, or had been born free, had risen, particularly in Louisiana, to wealth and to respectability in the estimation of the whites. Yet they occupied a status resembling that of the Jews in the mediæval ages, and it was a crime punishable with death for one of that

degraded class to strike a white man, however lightly he might weigh in the social scale. Hence, for a long time, to be bought by and to be the slave of one of that class was the most abject degradation into which a poor African could fall. If this statement be true,—and it will hardly be denied by anybody conversant with the South,—the different strata of the social body with us might be thus classified: the whites, the black or hybrid slaves, the black or hybrid freedmen, and the slaves of the freedmen.

Such was the condition, as I have briefly described it, of the aristocratic South and of the democratic North and West. The latter soon complained of the undue influence of the former in the affairs of the Union. Why undue? It was intellectual and not physical. The Southern States were inferior in population and in wealth. It cannot be material force that compels five able-bodied men to obey one. If it be true, as said by De Tocqueville, that the reign of democracy is the reign of mediocrity, and that aristocracies have always surpassed in statesmanship all the other forms of government, as witnessed by the histories of Rome, Venice, and England, the secret of Southern influence is found out. It arose from the peculiar institution which gave the South all the prestige and advantages of an aristocracy. This assertion, far from being refuted, is proved by the example of Athens, whose influence is still felt in the whole civilized world. What is called the democracy of Athens was aristocratic like the democracy of the Southern States, and much more so; it had nothing in common with modern democracies, as generally understood. Attica was a slave country. The Athenians, individually and collectively as a community, held slaves who worked, some for their masters and some for the commonwealth which owned them for the common welfare. Athens was not a democracy of plebeians, but rather of nobles, and I might say of demigods, for many of them claimed descent from the gods. They did not proclaim that all men were born free and equal, and recommend the amalgamation of races. They proclaimed the reverse. They thought themselves far above the rest of mankind, and they were. No foreigner could be naturalized among them, not even a Greek. As to the other nations, particularly the Asiatics, they were looked upon as utter barbarians. Nay, no one could be an Athenian except one of pure and unadulterated Attic blood through both sides of the house, and the son of Peri-

cles and Aspasia, the Ionian Greek, was not an Athenian, although born in Athens. It required a special law voted by these intense aristocrats to make him one of them, — that is, one of the gods of the earth who boasted of being the favorites and almost the companions of the gods of heaven. I am not here advocating or attacking aristocracies or democracies. I am merely stating facts, which the philosopher will admit, if they be denied by the politician or demagogue.

The clamor against the complained-of undue influence of the South over the affairs of the Federal government grew stronger at the North and West, in proportion as President after President from the South succeeded one another in Washington, and her statesmen asserted their authority in the halls of legislation at the national capital. The North and the West became more and more restive, and wondered at the cause of this phenomenon. What was the cause of it? It was instinctively felt, no doubt, although the masses who acted upon the impulse of that instinct did not admit the fact to themselves, and perhaps were not conscious of it, that the Southern preponderance, which created alarm and jealousy, was due to the peculiar institution. What other cause could there be for the Southern people being the masters in the Union as they were the masters of their slaves? Hence arose the slavery question, which was really an entirely political one under its humanitarian mask, at least for the leaders, and which it is not necessary here to present in all the phases and aspects which it assumed. There were many questions which agitated the North, the West, and the South, but they never went by the name of the Northern, the Western, or the Southern question. There never was but one purely sectional question,— emphatically known as the “Southern question,”— and that was the “slavery question”; it sprang in full armor from the Jupiter brow of the love of power,— a love of power which, through open or disguised attacks, by front or flank movements, aimed resolutely and incessantly at destroying the institution that produced a social, moral, and political idiosyncrasy in the South which was thought incompatible with that of the North and West. It was intended to have, as much as possible, a perfect assimilation between all the parts of the great republic. This could be done only by the abolition of slavery, which was the source of a white aristocracy, and then the South would cease to be dangerous, troublesome, and domineering.

The Missouri Compromise, the Fugitive Slave Law, and all the other measures adopted or rejected, which convulsed the people of the United States, and which were so fiercely and eloquently discussed in Congress, in the State legislatures, and in popular assemblies, were but incidents of the slavery or Southern question. They were eruptions on the surface of the national epidermis, for which political physicians prescribed, without daring to look into the cause which was buried in the entrails of the social body, and constituted the *real question*. Presidential elections turned upon it, and a gigantic war of four years' duration resulted in abolishing slavery, which empirics deemed a national evil, because of its producing Southern preponderance and solidification. What of the South at the present moment? Is it more or less solid than before? What of the Southern question? Has it perished with slavery? No, it has survived, say the North and West, more full of importance and vitality than ever. Why? The writer of this article may be permitted to answer: Because it is fanned into life from its ashes by the North and West; otherwise it would die a natural death, if let alone, as it has no natural cause of existence. The North and West should now be contented with the destruction of what they considered the cause of Southern predominance in the Union, and fold their huge democratic arms. Antæus has conquered Hercules, instead of being smothered by him; the Titans have pulled down the gods from high Olympus, and brought them down to the level of the sons of mother earth. The hated and envied aristocracy of the South has been so ploughed up and consumed that the strongest microscope could not discover a remaining vestige of it. From Maine to Florida the Tarquin rod has established a dead level of equality, and the oak is no longer permitted to tower over the reeds of humanity. Mediocrity is enthroned, with very few exceptions, in the seats of power all over the United States. The Washingtons, the Jeffersons, the Madisons, the Monroes, the Jacksons, have become antediluvian and the fossil productions of distant ages. The North and the West should be satisfied, for it is hardly to be expected that the South will continue to excel them in statesmanship, and control the destinies of the Union, as heretofore, by the superiority of its fitness to govern. Unfortunately for the hopes of the North and West, and for the expectations of those who thirsted for peace and its fruits, another question has sprung from the pre-

ceding and dead one, like the phoenix from its funereal pile, and it is a more difficult and startling one than the slavery question. It is the free-negro question and its solution. It is bound to solidify the Southern States more than the slavery question, because it is no longer a mere question of property, of individual or sectional wealth, or of political power, but a question of self-preservation, of civilization, and of the maintenance of the purity of a superior race. It is still the Southern question *par excellence*, but under a more terrible form. The creeping worm has been transformed into the winged insect of destruction.

Let us laconically consider the condition in which the war left the Southern States. Their white population had been more than decimated, and the greater portion of those who survived found themselves deprived of all their former civil and political rights, with which their former slaves were now invested. Those slaves were spontaneously transformed into a real aristocracy, proclaimed to be the wards and pets of the conqueror, whilst the former aristocrats had been reduced to be the servants of servants. It was a return to first principles, according to the Darwinian theory. The closest resemblance to ancestry may have given to those who possessed it the right to govern those who had departed the most, mentally and physically, from the original type. On that score the primogeniture of the negro could not be contested, and may have been the cause of the superior rank which was allotted to him. Not only were the whites trodden down into unsurpassed humiliation, but they were also ground into the most abject poverty. The whole surface of the Southern States was no longer invaded by armed hosts, but by what was worse,—hordes of plunderers, who came to help the negroes with their superior intelligence in gleaning what was left, that is, as an English writer said, “the top-boots and the breeches of the Southern planter.” All the honesty and intelligence of the country were driven out of sight into nooks, corners, and rat-holes, and the Southern States were delivered to the merciless legislation of ignorant negroes, acting blindly under the guidance of white leaders, the majority of whom will be eternally gibbeted in history under the appellations of carpet-baggers and scalawags. A recapitulation of the pecuniary losses of the South would stagger the imagination, and would swell too much the proportions of this

essay. Suffice it to say that the reputed indolent and helpless Sardanapalus of the South accepted his fate without unmanly murmurs, and went to work as if he had done nothing else since his infancy. His effeminate soft hand grasped the plough with more energy than had ever been done by his former slave; and the stately matron went with a serene smile to the kitchen and to the washtub. Blood will tell, notwithstanding the levelling doctrines of a mad age. I knew a lady in Europe who, when shrouded in costly lace and ablaze with diamonds, always wore on her breast a twopenny copper pin. During the French emigration which had preceded and followed the horrors of 1793, her noble father, too proud to beg, had supported life by manufacturing pins and huckstering them in the streets of the cities of Germany. At the restoration of the Bourbons he brought to his daughter one of those pins, and it was the one she wore, saying to me, "It is the most precious of all my jewels." Like the French nobleman, the South, in her adversity, has been manufacturing twopenny copper pins, which I hope will also be exhibited with pride by her posterity, when the days of prosperity shall return. All that she asked, in the mean time, was to be let alone in her humble struggle for bread. For twelve years this boon was refused. What was the consequence? What was bad grew worse every day, until, a better feeling prevailing at last at the North and West, military rule in the South was gradually relaxed, and is now entirely removed. This is auspicious, and promises halcyon days.

What is, however, our present condition? Not only are we desperately poor, but we have been sick so long that it is impossible to entertain any hope of a prompt convalescence. Industry is paralyzed, property is of no value, the taxes for the support of government can hardly be paid, commerce is at a dead stand, agriculture is hardly remunerative, and demoralization is rampant everywhere. In the midst of all the calamities they have gone through, during such trials as were seldom inflicted on the human family, if the population had been homogeneous and entirely of the noble and unconquerable Caucasian race, which has been created to take gradual possession of this globe, and carry civilization around its circumference, and whose fortitude is equal to any of the extremes of adversity, still the condition of the people of the

South would be such as to deserve to enlist the sympathies of the world in general, and particularly of our sister States at the North and West. What crimes could have been committed which had not been expiated by our long tortures? But this was not enough. When reduced to the last extremity of distress, when, panting and exhausted, we are left to find our way, unimpeded now, through a labyrinth of woes, we are called upon to meet the climax of them all, and to struggle against the most terrible curse which can afflict a country, — that of having face to face two races which are as different as day and night, and which can never fuse into a natural and harmonious whole.

The question of races is now the only Southern question. It came to life on the death-bed of the late Southern confederacy. To give a clearer view of it by narrowing the area which the eye is to embrace, let us confine it to Louisiana, with the remark that what will be said of Louisiana applies with more or less force to the other Southern States. From the surrender of General Lee to the hour when the Federal troops were withdrawn by President Hayes, the destinies of the State were in the hands of the emancipated negroes, whose only claim to pre-eminence was, that they constitute a race which it was intended to favor, and with which coalesced a band of white adventurers who had come to the subjugated South like vultures to the battle-field. The Federal government, in the hands of the Republican party, adopted the negroes, insomuch as they were a race, as its wards, passed laws for their special protection as a race, and in reality subjected the white race to the black. The former slaves had become a privileged class and domineered over their former masters. The State was delivered to the organized pillage of the blacks, and the whites were driven to desperation. To maintain this condition of things it was necessary that the Federal government should, in open violation of constitutions, laws, and vested rights, stretch its mighty arm to keep the weaker race on the top of the stronger one. Hence the social body was inverted; the feet were up and the head down. There was such a bubbling up of scum to the surface of the boiling caldron as had never been seen before, and Swift's fictitious story of the Yahoos became a reality. This language is not too strong. It is impossible to find in history that a conqueror systematically took the most ignorant portion of a conquered pop-

ulation,—the ploughmen, the stable valets, the scavengers,—whose intelligence and habits were of the lowest, to make them governors, legislators, judges, and the rulers of wealthy provinces. When Caracalla made his horse consul, it was intended probably as a contemptuous sneer at the Roman people. The noble quadruped could do no harm in his office. But when bipeds hardly superior to Caracalla's horse were armed with judicial, legislative, and executive power in the South, it was a terrible, stubborn, living fact, not an idle jest, and we are still suffering from the consequences. Socrates, proclaimed by divine authority the wisest of mankind, is reported to have said that "he who attempted to be the ruler of men without having the necessary qualifications was a great deal worse than a parricide." It means, I suppose, that if it be monstrous to give the withering and slow-killing poison of the Borgias to a father, it is still more horrible to administer it to a whole people. But the poor negro, when he left his field and his hut to enter the halls of legislation and to preside in courts of justice, had not sense enough to know what he was doing. Therefore he is not to be blamed. The dagger which strikes is guiltless; it is the hand that wields it which is criminal. The conqueror, therefore, who used these instruments of darkness and ignorance to rule civilized communities, after the fashion he did, committed a crime worse than that of parricide, according to Socrates. Two motives only can be assigned to the unprecedented cause which he pursued: first, to gratify a deep-rooted resentment against the States which it had cost him so much to subjugate. An ocean of blood and an ocean of gold had been called up from their vast reservoirs, and had combined to submerge a resistance which threatened the North and West with appalling ruin. Hence the angry flood of chastisement was to be as sweeping as the magnitude of the crime was supposed to be, and every vestige of a resistance and of resources which had inspired such terrors was to be forever removed. Popular wrath, more terrible than that of God, which is always tempered by mercy, and which is perhaps mercy itself in disguise, seemed to have pronounced the celebrated words, *Delenda est Carthago*, as much as possible. This may have been one cause of action. The second was, according to the evidence found in the Draconian record of facts known to all, the settled and inflexible determination of the victorious Republican

party, North and West, to secure the continuance of its domination over the South, destined to be, as it fondly believed, the impregnable citadel of the power which it intended long to exercise over the whole Union. Five millions of blacks, whom it claimed to have set free from the gushing impulse of the broadest philanthropy, and not from the stern necessities of war, or the sordid calculations of self-interest, were to be solidified into a unit for the profit of the Republican party, and that solid faction could be kept together only by the cohesion of plunder cemented by irresponsible power, however reckless in its exercise. Of course, gratitude was kept out of sight by the experienced manipulators of the scheme.

It required no supernatural gift of vision to foresee what would be the result of the conqueror's resentful and over-ambitious policy for the States where it was to be implanted, particularly in Louisiana and South Carolina, where the dark element of misrule predominated. In these two States there was such a topsy-turvy condition of things as to baffle description and defy belief. It was a pandemonium, not of those grand spirits described by Milton, who had waged war against the Almighty, and bore on their haughty and unbending foreheads the marks of his blasting wrath, and had yielded only to the thunderbolt of Omnipotence, but a kitchen uprising of impish dwarfs, of creeping things used to the chains of servitude, crouching under the flagellation of centuries, and relying for their support on outside power; for in themselves there was nothing. There was flesh and blood, such as it was, but no intellectual and moral entity whatever. The excesses perpetrated under this reign of insane power are such, that they will have to be softened by the historian, because truth would appear too much like exaggeration to be believed by posterity, and the indicted culprits would derive protection and gain acquittal because of the very enormity of their crimes. Nothing can be more painful to an American than to relate, that these saturnalia of the most brutish appetites, that this domination of ignorance over knowledge, of barbarism over civilization, of matter over spirit, lasted fully twelve years under the flag and bayonets of the United States. Admitting that rebellion against the best of governments was an unpardonable crime, was not the punishment disproportionately severe, and has it not recoiled on those who inflicted

it? What could be a more heinous sin than the rebellion of the first man against his Creator? We know the decree of God against him and his posterity. It was not that of subjection to the gorilla. Even in the works of the imagination there is a poetical justice to be observed. Shakespeare would have violated its rules, and shocked the delicate sense of propriety which is more or less developed in our nature, if he had made Ariel the slave of Caliban instead of Prospero.

I mention these things, not in a harsh spirit of recrimination, but to explain the open and occult resistance which they met at the South. The probing of a wound is a painful process, but is necessary for its cure. If the North and West wish to analyze and understand the Southern heart, they must permit the South to tell them frankly and calmly, for the purpose of enlightening, not of offending, the feelings which prevail in that region and its view of the treatment to which it was subjected. If the South is wrong, if it is morally and intellectually diseased, the diagnostics of that infirmity must be ascertained correctly, in order to provide for the remedy. I shall therefore proceed with the diagnosis of the Southern question. Oblivious of animosities which should be things of the past, as are those acts which produced them, the North and West should only think of that bleeding member of their family who lies prostrate at their feet, and who, being prostrate, ought to be safe from further blows at the hands of an alien foe, and, with much more reason, of a domestic one. Justly or unjustly, the North and West struck the fatal blow. If they wielded the lance of Achilles,—and no other could have conquered us,—they ought to remember that it cured the wounds which it inflicted.

If the statements I have made are true,—and there are, indeed, very few Southern men who will not swear to their truth,—the policy of the Federal government since the collapse of the “lost cause” could not but have met at the South with the most determined resistance on the part of those who suffered from it, and that resistance culminated at last in the gubernatorial struggles between Nicholls and Packard, Hampton and Chamberlain. But these struggles were mere episodes of the Southern question; they were not *the* question. Thus, the lightning that rives the thick-ribbed oak is not the storm, but proceeds from it. It is an effect, and the details of the effect may amuse curiosity. The

main point, however, is to prevent the storm, or to control it. The long series of secret societies rioting in blood, of assassinations and outrages of all sorts alleged to have been committed, were the eruptions of smoke, rock, flame, and lava, which indicated the throes of the now slumbering and now active volcano. They are in themselves unworthy of being dwelt upon; it is the volcano which is to be extinguished by removing the cause that gave it life. At last it was discovered that this warfare against the principles of government on which the United States rested could not be kept up any longer. The common-sense of the people, North and West, awoke from its lethargy, and it became a political necessity to restore self-government to Louisiana and South Carolina, as it had been re-established in the other Southern States, one after the other. The pressure of the Federal foot has been withdrawn, a deep sigh of relief has heaved out of the breast on which its iron heel had been placed, the whites have been re-enfranchised and have risen to perfect equality with the blacks, whilst both populations are enjoying together, in apparent contentment, the milk and honey of the Fifteenth Amendment under the broad fig-tree of the Constitution of the United States. Is the Southern question settled? Not at all. It is more difficult of solution than ever, for it is no longer, how the slaves shall acquire their freedom, but how, being free, they shall live in harmony with their former masters. This turns on another question, — the question of races, which has attracted for so many centuries the attention of the historian, the physiologist, the philosopher, and the statesman.

I will not exhaust the lores of history to show the interminable conflicts of races when they attempt to settle in the same country, as long as the weaker does not merge into the stronger, or consents to be subservient to its interests or prejudices, in an acknowledged condition of inferiority, nor shall I dwell on that mysterious law of Providence which seems to compel certain races to move from their cradles, when the predestined hour has struck, and go onward in the pointed direction, to hunt as it were after other races which that Providence had originally placed at a long distance, and which in the end it brings together, in order that one should wipe the other out of existence. The annals of the earth, written and unwritten, existing in traditions and history, or inscribed as it

were by the finger of God on the very rocks of the globe, testify as to those human waves succeeding one another with the same uniform effect of submerging what they encountered, and sometimes sparing only strange relics and unaccountable monuments which are silent witnesses to the past existence of those who left no other record. The same organized system of destruction of the weak by the strong is admitted to prevail among all animated nature. Animals, birds, insects, fishes, the dwellers of the air, of the land, and of the sea, even the innumerable families of the vegetable kingdom, — all are subjected to the same progress, the same securing decree, — inferiority never being permitted to cohabit amicably with superiority, but perishing under its inimical contact, to make room for higher organizations. *Dura lex*, it may be, *sed lex*. It is the law; man may retard, but can he prevent its final execution? This is the difficulty we are called upon to meet, and this the problem to solve in the South, and particularly in Louisiana. We are expected to do what has never been done before. We have now in this State two races as distinct as nature could make them, equal in numbers and in the possession of the same political and civil rights, gradually and strongly squinting toward social equality. Is not the magnitude of our task, and, I may say, the horrors of the experiment forced upon us, sufficiently appalling, to enlist sympathies and assistance, instead of detraction and opposition?

I have described the condition of the whites since the war; I now proceed to do the same for the blacks. Their emancipation has made the two races more distinct and antagonistical. When slavery existed as an institution, there was a kindlier feeling than now on the part of the whites for the population of color, in bondage or free, because their superiority was not questioned. On one side, at least, there was not the memory of inflicted wrong, and the resentment resulting from adverse pretensions. The majestic oak looked complacently upon the thriving shrubs below its broad canopy, but when the undergrowth aspired to rival the towering proportions of the monarch of the forest, the frown of the royal displeasure manifested itself. In the days of the acknowledged inferiority established by long usage and by law, the consequences of familiarity were not so much to be avoided by the superior race, and the indulgence of the master for his slave was much

greater than any that ever was granted by the master to his hired servant in free countries. The want of respect and subordination frequently exhibited, with the boldest freedom of language and manner, could be only tolerated by conscious and undisputed superiority, resting, as it was then thought, on the strongest of all laws,— the laws of nature, by which was established the immense distance existing between the white and black. Notwithstanding that distance there were many instances of culpable sexual intercourse between the white man and the black woman, as testified by the existence of a population marked by the variety of the hues of its complexion. Gentlemen occupying a high position were known to have colored families, to which they bequeathed large fortunes. Thus there arose by degrees a considerable population, neither black nor white, but composed of hybrids, in whom the white blood predominated more or less. Those in whose veins it was the most abundant prided themselves upon that circumstance, and considered themselves as superior to those who had not that advantage to the same degree. Gentlemen of culture, and even filling the first offices of the State, associated with the female part of those families, but not with the male; brothers, for instance, were not permitted to be in the parlor where their sisters flirted, nor to go to the balls where those hybrid beauties met their Caucasian admirers. They stopped at the door, not possessing that aristocracy of sex which was a passport. Nothing of the kind any longer exists. A gentleman living conjugally with a colored woman, or even indulging in flitting amours, would be tabooed, and the woman would be repudiated by those of her class. No longer are black nurses allowed to kiss or spank white children; no longer are old black men and women greeted by white youths with the endearing appellations of *uncle* and *aunt*y. The black servants refuse to sleep under the roof of their white employers,— I will not say masters, that would be offensive,— but have their rooms elsewhere. They have their clubs and societies like the whites; and except the few who are Catholics, refuse to worship God in the same temples with the other race. They have their own churches and their own ministers. If, as workmen, they strike for higher wages or less labor, it is in the name of *their race*; and whatever they claim politically and civilly it is *as a race*. Exceedingly gregarious, they are tenacious of their habits and

peculiarities *as a race*; and, being remarkably feeble-minded and dependent individually, they feel that it is only by their associated strength *as a race* that they are anything. In addition to these natural dispositions on their part, the political and civil rights with which they have been invested since their emancipation having been exerted by them in a manner which has generally been thought offensive, and almost always dangerous to the whites, it has alienated the latter, and driven the two races more apart. The credulous presumption of the negro exceeds belief. When he was set free he really thought, in a vague and confused manner, that there had been at last discovered in his race some hidden excellence which he could not precisely account for to himself, but which had become too patent to be denied; that, being a negro, it was natural that he should be put above his former white master, who, in his opinion, could not have made a living without him, although he was convinced, nevertheless, as an article of faith, that his Southern master was far above any Northern or Western man, whom he would always whip in a fair fight. He believed that he would be pampered in idleness by the liberating government; that he would work no more, or very little; that he would at least have forty acres and a mule assigned to him, with provisions, out of the possessions of the subjugated whites; and that the former slaves were called upon to rule in their turn, because they had served before. Even after years of patient and fruitless waiting for the happening of something which will supply them, without the necessity of labor, with all they need, they still crowd densely around the State House whenever the legislature in which figure negro representatives is in session. Fixing their eyes steadfastly on the walls of the building, with gaping mouths, in the vain hope that some celestial manna may fall into the aperture, there they stand the whole day, braving cold and rain, and returning on the next morning to gaze vacantly at the same imaginary object. Strangers passing by wonder at this sad spectacle of idiocy. As to the women, they soon became *ladies*, and would not labor either in the field or in the household. Even at the present day those whom the necessities of life have compelled to resume their former menial occupations do it with reluctance and as a favor bestowed; refusing, as I have already related, to sleep under the roof of their employ-

ers. That, in their uncouth ideas, would be a badge of servitude. So resolute are the men to assert and maintain their equality, if not their supremacy, as a race, that they claim the right to supply us with governors, United States Senators, and fill every office, no matter how far above their capacity. The blacks are as numerous as the whites in Louisiana, and aspire to half of the offices in the gift of the State and of the Federal government within the State, because of their color and race. They ignore the Fifteenth Amendment, which they consider to have been adopted as a stumbling-block in the way of the whites. Of course it does not apply to them, and it is understood that there must be a secret, if not an open, discrimination of race and color in their behalf. Without their assistance the Rebels could not have been subdued, and therefore too much cannot be done for them. This difference must be particularly noticed between the two races. On every occasion the negro asserts his race as a robust fact, giving him title to what he claims, independently of right and capacity. It is not so with the white man. The reason is that the negro does not know what official capacity, fitness, or adaptation means; and I am inclined to believe that there is hardly one of them who, being informed that he had been elected President of the United States by some incomprehensible hocus-pocus, would not enter upon the duties of that exalted office without the slightest misgiving.

This negro element contains within itself another element, *imperium in imperio*, which is the hybrid element, much the smaller, but most potent for action and influence. I have already stated that the negro, when a slave, looked down with contempt and aversion on the mulatto, whom he considered as not of pure blood like himself, and whom he called a "mule." On the other hand, this "mule," proud of an admixture of nobler blood, despised the black dray-horse of labor, and in this way the mulatto or quadroon, or whatever was his degree of hybridity, acknowledged the superiority of the race from which he partly proceeded, and which he hated and taxed with injustice because rejected from its ranks, forgetful, as he was, of the stern logic, that if he (the hybrid) was superior to the black because of the admixture of Caucasian blood, he (the Caucasian) had the right to keep aloof from his inferior (the hybrid) because of the admixture of African blood, the hybrid being thus judged according to the law laid down by himself.

The hybrid is right in one respect, which is, that, inferior in muscle and brute force, he is far superior to the black in intelligence, and more susceptible of a higher degree of civilization in proportion to the quantity of Caucasian blood which he has in his veins. The hybrid is therefore convicted, on his own testimony, of acknowledging the superiority of the white race. If that is the case, what right has he to complain of the superiority over him claimed by the white man, who has no other fluid in his veins than that blood of which a mere portion is the title of the hybrid to a higher rank? Surely a bottle of half wine and half water never was equal to a bottle of pure wine. Of that class there are about a hundred in Louisiana, who have made themselves conspicuous by the ambitious pruriency of their pretensions. Without them the negro element would be perfectly quiet and manageable. The negro, as a race, has never aspired, nor will ever aspire, to an equality with the white race. Nature, which is a kind mother, has put infallible instincts within every created and animated thing for self-preservation, and the negro instinctively feels that equality or the coveted fraternal embrace of the white man would be the rugged and deadly hug of the bear. What he wants is kind words, a smiling face to greet him, reasonable wages, as little labor as possible, indulgence of sensual appetites, and a hot sun to bask in. But he is goaded into a feverish state of unnatural ambition by designing white men and by discontented hybrids, who, for interested purposes, call themselves the representatives of a race which they abhor, because the blood of that race is the innocent cause of their humiliation. How a hybrid can be the representative of any race on the ground of blood, is what common-sense cannot understand. The hybrid, I know, says to the white man, It is because you reject me, that I throw myself into the ranks of the blacks. But would his adoption make him a representative of the white race? Certainly not, no more than the adoption of a white man by the blacks would make him a representative of their race. If it means merely that the hybrid, having by blood more affinity with the negro, is a safer representative of his feelings and interests than the white man, it would be agreed to, if it was not known beyond controversy that the hybrid is more anxious than the white man to keep himself aloof from the negro, and has more repugnance for association in good faith with him, on a footing of equality, than ever was enter-

tained by the haughtiest Caucasian. No; the truth is, that the negro is the black screen behind which the hybrid moves onward from the enjoyment of political and social rights to social equality, oblivious, in the intense selfishness of his desire, that if there should be social equality for him, there must be the same for the negro. He openly says, it is true, that, as there is no social equality among the whites, he does not claim it as between himself and his ivory-skinned fellow-citizens. But the example or comparison cited does not apply. The rough uneducated white man does not pretend to social equality with the men and women of culture of his race, and does not repine at not obtaining it, because the reason of the exclusion is not galling to him. He or his children may in time attain to that boon by qualifying themselves for it. But the negro or hybrid, who is ostracized from that magic circle of social equality, can never hope to enter it, because no degree of refinement or education can entitle him, or his posterity, if traceable to their origin to overleap the insurmountable barrier of exclusion. This alone would convert Eden into hell for him. Hence he raves when mixed schools are opposed, and is willing that his children should sit on the academic bench with the darkest negro lad on one side, provided a white boy should sit on the other. It might be the cradle, as he hopes, of social equality, not, be it understood, between the hybrid and the negro, but between the white and the hybrid, and the proof of it is, that should there be distinct schools for the distinct races, the hybrid says, with a voice choked with indignation, that he will rather murder his children than send them to the black schools, and yet he claims politically to be the representative of the black race; and although the hybrids are comparatively a handful in Louisiana, they obtain a much greater number of offices from presidents and governors than the pure race. It is an unjust farce. It was, however, the same thing in St. Domingo, where the hybrid made a tool of the full-blooded African, and it is the same thing everywhere else, whether it be Indian, Mongolian, or African hybridism, proceeding from sexual intercourse with the white race. The superiority of the Caucasian blood, even in infinitesimal doses, always tells.

Of that injustice the black man begins to complain, and asks to be represented by himself and not by the hybrid, and as he is twenty times more numerous than the hybrid, what will become

in the end, of that unfortunate class, neither white nor black, hanging like Mohammed's coffin between heaven and earth, and rejected by the two races from which he proceeds? It is impossible to have too much pity for the condition in which they are; nothing could be more cowardly than to outrage their feelings voluntarily; they are entitled to address well-merited reproaches to their Caucasian parents. It must be admitted that nothing can be more bitter for the created than to be disowned by the Creator for no other reason than the humiliating recollection of the mode of creation. But let them remember that it is the law that we should be cursed for our parents' sins, whites and blacks. So far as I am personally concerned, I have no hesitation in saying, so intense is my love for intellect, honesty, and high-mindedness, that I would rather breakfast, dine, and sup, and even sleep, with a noble-hearted, refined, and classically educated hybrid than with a dishonest, ignorant, and brutish white man. Nay, in my paroxysm of admiration for those attributes of the head and heart which elevate civilized man above the condition of the savage, I would much prefer seeing as governor of Louisiana, or as President of the United States, a full-blooded negro, as dark as Erebus, with Hyperion's beauty of intellect, if not of physical form, than a Caucasian as white as mountain snow, but deformed in mind and heart, giving an incessant lie to the expected excellences of his race, and rejoicing, as it were, in being a cheat to others and to himself. After having said as much, I will insist, for the interest of both the black and white races, that they be kept as distinct as possible, and more distinct than ever; and the hybrids should insist on it more strenuously than I do. Let them set their faces against the increase of their unfortunate class by the cohabitation of the black with the Caucasian. Should they steadfastly adhere to this resolution, and make it an inflexible rule; should they separate themselves more and more from the black race, instead of falsely asserting to be its representatives; should they faithfully obey the instinct which prompts them to do so, their temporary sacrifices of wounded pride and of flitting interests will be rewarded in due time, if not in themselves, at least in their descendants. They will not, it is true, break open by violence the gates of the lofty range of the mountains of the Caucasus, at whose summits in the distance they look with so much envy, but they

will gradually, as many families of their class have done before, climb stealthily, under the friendly winking of the sentinels and through secret paths, to the snow-capped region they covet, after having patiently assimilated themselves to its occupants. May it be the fate of the last of the hybrids, and may thus the recollection of wrongs be forever obliterated! It must be the result of the masterly inactivity of patience. Patience! I know it is a hard word, but it works wonders. Have not the Jews waited eighteen hundred years under much worse afflictions? This advice will probably be angrily received. I am conscious, however, that it is given in all kindness, and with it I dismiss all further remarks on a class among whom there are many who, it is a pleasure to me to declare, are entitled to the highest tribute of respect and esteem.

I have said already, and I repeat, that the white race and the black race are drawing farther apart every day, notwithstanding the time-serving asseverations of politicians to the contrary. The negro insists that, in the distribution of State and Federal patronage, so many offices should be reserved as belonging to his race, in proportion to its numbers, and in these pretensions it is to be regretted that he is encouraged by governors and presidents, who, in so doing, have certainly not the intention of perjuring themselves, but who, nevertheless, give a violent twist to their official oath. Constitutionally, it is a violation of the Fifteenth Amendment; morally, it is an outrage to the spirit of our institutions, which requires that merit only should be the basis of reward and preferment; as a matter of policy, it is wrong, because it is nothing but an expedient; statesmen worthy of the name do not deal in expedients, but in the application of principles founded on the rock of truth.

Before the abolition of slavery in the manner it was done, right or wrong, and before the Federal Government meddled with that question, the United States contained the most prosperous people on the world. How different is their condition now! It is asserted that in the North and West of our grand Republic there is on an average a pauper out of every ten souls, and in the richest portion — the State of New York — one in every thirteen souls, to be supported by its government! There is a general paralysis from Maine to Florida, and the Federal debt, the indebtedness of the States

respectively, of the municipal and private corporations, and of individuals, produce a total that may be said to constitute a mortgage larger in amount than the public and private property throughout the United States; and that property itself has diminished one half in value. If it be true that to be in debt is to be in bondage, then out of forty millions of Americans, there are thirty-five millions of white slaves, and five millions of free blacks; the blacks being the only ones among us who are not in debt, — for a very good reason, because they have no property and no credit. If this has been the result of the solution of the slavery question, ought it not to make the North and West more cautious as to meddling with the free-negro question? The sooner to settle it, and the safer way of proceeding, is to leave it entirely to the Southern States, in which the evil lies. There is no reason why it should rise to the dignity of a national question, and therefore it should not be allowed to be made a party question; for all party questions are bound to be more or less national, and if the poor negro should much longer be made the pivot of national strife between thirty or forty millions of whites, it is evident that it will not be long before he will be ground to dust between the upper and the nether stone. In mercy to our amiable, gentle, and docile black fellow-citizen when he is left to himself and to his proper sphere, we earnestly beg the blind philanthropists of the age not to shove him like a log of wood into the hot furnace of political cremation. We do not wish him to be consumed into cinders, but we kindly intend, if permitted, to nurse and to guide him, for he requires careful nursing and guiding into as useful and happy a condition as his nature will allow. With that benevolent end in view, let the negro question be no longer a political one; let it be what it should really be, — a mere police question. That question itself is sufficiently difficult to be treated with all the skill of which the South is susceptible, and with all the moral assistance and encouraging sympathy it has the right to expect from the North and West. Need they be told that they cannot but be vitally affected by a cancer even in the most distant part of the great Federal body to which they belong?

The truth must be plainly, firmly, respectfully told. The Southern man owes it to himself to say emphatically, that he will keep forever distinct the white race from the black, in obedience to the

law of God which has established that distinction. This sense of duty is in the soul of every Southern man and woman ; it springs in the heart of every Northern or Western man, and of every European, six months at furthest after having settled among us, although, for considerations of policy, a different sentiment may find passage through his reluctant lips. There never will be peace and prosperity in the Southern States as long as Caucasian supremacy shall be opposed there. Force may temporarily bend the white man's proud head under negro rule, — his own free will, never ; for it would be one of those crimes which the French call *contre nature*. What, then, does the Southern white man intend to do with the black race ? Oppress or annihilate those weak beings ? Neither the one nor the other. The black man did not come to us ; our ancestors went to him, and brought him here by force. His presence has turned out to be a curse, but it is a curse of our own hatching, and we must not make it worse by perpetrating a greater crime than our predecessors did. We were, in general, kind masters, and they, on the whole, were dutiful slaves, even affectionate to a certain degree. During the war, and after, they behaved to us as well as could be expected. We have no resentment to entertain against them, but for the sake of the negro and of ourselves we must maintain our supremacy. We cannot justly be called upon by blind benevolence or ignorant fanaticism or party dictation to do what could not be expected from any other people. Suppose our negroes were transported to Massachusetts, and composed half of the population of that Commonwealth, would the sons of the sturdy old Puritans melt into such tender philanthropy as to permit those negroes to occupy half of the offices of that State, and claim one of the two Senators and half of the Representatives in Congress ? If half of the population of England were composed of Hindoos, would half of its government be granted to men whom every Englishman would consider his inferior ? Surely there is no country that carries so far as France the crazy doctrine of universal equality and fraternity, and yet should five millions of negroes migrate to France, and, on the ground of their constituting one sixth of its population, arrogantly claim one sixth of the civil and military offices of that most liberal of all commonwealths, not by virtue of capacity, but of the black or bronze color of their skin, what Gallic explosion would there

not be, scaring the timid sons of Ham out of their little wits forever? This is not the way we are disposed to solve the free-negro question.

The Federal bayonets having been withdrawn, self-government having been restored to us, and trust put in our humanity and statesmanship, we intend to control the negro vote by superior intelligence, by persuasion, and not by violence. It is to the white man that he confides his private interests. It is he whom he takes for his agent, his representative, his adviser, and his protector in all the transactions of life. It is particularly the Southern white man, and above all his former master, that he will prefer intrusting with his money, or consulting about the disposition of it. If left to his own instinct or judgment, and not biased by the misrepresentations and slanders of certain demons of discord, he will also trust his superior white friend with the management of his political affairs, and he will have his share in the general prosperity that will be the result of peace and reciprocal good-will between the two races. It is not improbable that, such being the case, there will be an attempt from Northern and Western quarters to curtail or abolish entirely the franchises forced upon the negroes against the will of the Southern whites. The strange and anomalous spectacle may then be presented to the world, of these very whites stoutly defending and maintaining the rights of the blacks.

It is to be hoped that the solution of the free-negro question will be left entirely to those who best understand its difficulties and are the most interested in surmounting them to the satisfaction and welfare of whites and blacks. The Federal government may retain a general supervision over the practical workings of the question, and interfere in case of manifest necessity. Mere supervision is not feared by the South; it purposes to violate no rights. Equal opportunity for education ought to be given to the blacks as well as to the whites. If education — that is, what goes by that name — should operate on the negro as spirituous liquors on the Indian, and, by rendering him more worthless, as predicted by many, hasten his destruction, no reproach will attach to the South. If, on the contrary, the negro should improve in morals, in intellect and industry, we shall be benefited by this desired change. If in that state of gradual improvement he continues to be inferior to the white race, his diminution in number will be less rapid, whilst en-

joying in his subordinate pursuits the protection of a more powerful race, with which there will be no cause of conflict. Should the black man die out in the end, as he probably will, of weak lungs and from the want of congenial air in the more elevated region to which he has been raised, and to which he cannot be acclimated, let it not be recorded that it is due to bad treatment on our part. But if, contrary to the teachings of history and science, the negro should rise to an equality of intelligence and energy with the Caucasian, should the struggle for power inaugurate a war of races, the Trojans and Greeks having the same weapons and being matched in courage and skill, the conflict will be intensified, and become more terrible. In the end one of the two, more favored by adventitious circumstances,—and it is easy to foresee on which side those circumstances are to be,—will destroy the other, according to all known laws and precedents. The love of power, like the love of woman, cannot be shared; it is implacable in its jealousy,—no two men, no two nations, no two races, ever divided it in peace. President Lincoln, in his first allocution to a negro deputation, after his Proclamation of Emancipation, warned them that they could not aspire to live on a footing of equality with the whites. He predicted that the attempt would be fatal to their race. The advice was the unpalatable one of a true friend. The prediction may yet be that of a true prophet.

Every century has had its question. Those questions have settled themselves,—most of them in an unforeseen manner. The free-negro question is a terrible one for us of the South. But it will have a solution also in the course of events. The Fates weave slowly the web of destiny for individuals, for families, and for nations. In the mean time let us do like a skilful physician. When he is perplexed by the disease of his patient, he confines himself to careful nursing, and, refraining from hazardous remedies, relies on the curative powers of nature. Let us also rely on that Providence which has a solution for everything. There are crises where the cry of wisdom should be, “Hands off, mortals!” *Ecce Deus.*

The author of this article would not have written it, if his determination had not been to speak “the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth,” as he understands it to be. If, with President Lincoln, he predicts to the black race that it will never live in peace with the white on a footing of equality, whilst possessing

equality of number, and claiming the exercise of the equality of political, civil, and social rights, — the latter of which is the complement of the two former, — it is not from a feeling of hostility to the inevitably doomed, — doomed like the Indians, doomed like many other races. His object is to guard the weak against aspirations and efforts which will end in disappointment and hasten a more active and deadly struggle. The writer was just and friendly to the free colored population, when, in 1831, a mere youth then, he made in the State legislature a report against a bill ordering their expulsion, and providing that no slave should be emancipated, except to be sent by his master to Liberia. It was a popular bill which was defeated only by the most strenuous efforts. In 1863 the author proposed to set free all the negroes who should take up arms for the South, and advised a treaty with England and France, by which the Confederate States, in consideration of these two powers recognizing their independence, should bind themselves to a gradual and final emancipation of their slaves, and should join their moral influence, after their complete independence, to that of France and England, with a view of inducing Spain and Brazil to abolish African bondage, so that contemporaneous with the appearance of the Southern Confederacy in the family of nations would be the abolition of slavery throughout the civilized world. On those occasions, as on this, the motto of this writer was the one adopted by this Review: —

“Tros Tyriusque mihi nullo discrimine agetur.”

CHARLES GAYARRÉ.